

Chase, J. Russell  
interviewed by Vivian Andrist on  
May 7, 1987, Eastham, MA

Eastham Historical Society-Oral Histories

1 audiocassette (ca. 90 min.)+transcript

Chapel in the Pines (Eastham, MA)

#2

Interview #2

Interview with J. Russell Chase  
in Eastham, Massachusetts

by Vivian Andrist  
May 7, 1987

Q: This is the second interview with Russell Chase. It's taking place in his house in Eastham, Massachusetts. The date is May 7, 1987, and the interviewer is Vivian Andrist. This is part of the oral history project of the Eastham Historical Society. And Russell, I am just going to turn this over to you. We are going to be talking about the history of the Chapel in the Pines on Samoset Road in Eastham and various other things that are of interest to the history of Eastham.

Russell: First I'm going to give the ministers of the Chapel in the Pines, beginning 1889.

Donald Fraser

Edwin Pierce

<sup>W.</sup>  
Fred Evans

Henry E. Lesh

Nathan S. Hill

Henry Riegel

Arthur Mercer

And our first and only woman, Hazel S. Kirk

<sup>Rodney</sup>  
Roderick J. Mooney ? Mooney (?) 12/13/71 11:3

Thomas Cross

Otis Alvord

Henry Maier

Robert Weston, Sr.

And then summers, following the reopening of the Chapel in  
the Pines by Robert Weston:

Rev. William L. McKinney

Rev. John Christensen

Rev. Harry Roggee

Rev. Daniel Weck

and Rev. John Ogden Fisher

Q: May I interrupt a moment? What denomination are these  
ministers?

Russell: All these ministers, until Robert Weston, were strictly  
Universalists. And from there on out, there's a combination of  
Unitarian and some were still strictly Universalists. Harry  
Roggee had been a Baptist minister, I believe. John Ogden Fisher  
and Daniel Weck were after the merger of the Universalist-  
Unitarians.

The next group, the interim pastors:

Harold Arnold

Dudley Zuver, who was an Episcopalian Rector turned writer.  
Charles De Vries from the Brewster Unitarian Church.

Interim lay speakers:

J. Russell Chase

Edythe Trautz

Attorney Axel Graven

Rev. Peter Palchers

Miss Clarissa Smith

Miss Eleanor Gay

Mrs. George Dickey

Rev. John Filler and

Rev. Estherbrook

During the time when I was speaker and president, also Edythe Trautz, we instituted coffee hour after church; penny banks, of which I have two on the shelf; and the use of lay preachers.

This period of time was perhaps the most interesting, after the outstanding revolutionary sermons of Robert T. Weston.

Q: What dates were these, Russell?

Russell: Without looking it up, I'm not sure. This was up until the Nauset Fellowship was organized. At that period of time I was in Wellfleet and had no contact with the Chapel in the Pines.

The organists, pianists and guest soloists. Apparently we had two first organists: Sarah Smith Livingston and my own



grandmother, Harriet Gill Chase. Next, Carrie Forrest, and Miss Bessie Penniman, who was a pianist, from the Penniman house. Eugenia Hatch Schwind Merrill, who had played for the New Thought group, and my previous piano teacher, elementary, from Eastham, Frances H. Sullivan.

At the time when I took over, there was a frequent rotation between me, Eugenia Merrill and Dorothy Johnson, the mother of Barbara Melch<sup>er</sup>~~er~~ Robinson and Joyce Johnson and Nonnie Johnson Temple.

This period of time was followed by E. Weston Wilbur and Mrs. John Ogden Fisher, Dorothy Fisher, who was an extremely skillful organist.

Q: Was this the same organ that is there now?

Russell: No. That came when E. Weston Wilbur took over, and I believe it came by way of contact he had with St. Mary's of the Harbor in Provincetown. It was a condemned organ when it came to the Chapel in the Pines, and it was repaired by Mr. Wilbur, who was not only very talented in performing on it, but very talented in repairing it.

Now our guest performers:

Mrs. Robert Weston. This was Ruth Weston, and her favorite song, which she sang many times and I played for her, was called "This Is My Task".

Mrs. Henry Clark, voice.

Mrs. Maurice Wiley. This was Myrtle Wiley, who was guest

from the Methodist Church.

Mrs. Ruby Adams, voice.

Thomas Nassi, flute.

Albert Nassi, who was killed in World War II. He was a very talented violinist.

Also Nicholas Simon, Sr., violin, whose particular specialty was tracking down unwritten gypsy music, which he played at a hotel in I think Pennsylvania.

Mrs. George Howard, who played the auto-harp.

At this period in time, the Cape Cod Conservatory used the Chapel in the Pines as a teaching studio, and we had constant people from the Conservatory, who sang at our services, special services, and the anniversaries.

And that list includes:

Lt. Ernest Paul Johnson.

Mrs. Jay Mead, Jr. That was Camilla.

Mrs. Bion Pierce, Charlotte.

Miss Susan Campbell, voice.

Mr. Bruce Campbell, trumpet.

Lt. Ron Mucha, voice.

LeRoy Madary, tenor, concert tenor.

And I was the accompanist to all of these from the Conservatory.

The Chapel in the Pines was also used for concert purposes. Miss Clarissa Smith; Betty Rich Beardwood, who was a pupil of Martha Atwood Baker of the Metropolitan; and one other young lady, whose name I do not recall, except her first name was Ruth.

[Ruth Arnold]

There were performances by Oliv Maine Choral Group. The conductor LeRoy Madary, accompanist J. Russell Chase and Marjorie Schofield. Concerts by LeRoy Madary. These were solo concerts, and I was accompanist for him.

The typical Christmas night was the reading of the "Night Before Christmas", which was done by my mother, who was an elocutionist and dramatic art teacher. Her name was Mabel Chase. Singing of the traditional Christmas Carols, and an organ and piano duo by E. Weston Wilbur and J. Russell Chase. The Christmas tree, giving of gifts, and the Christmas story told by the minister in charge of the service.

This is a copy of the material taped by Mabel W. Chase for the 75th anniversary.

"I, Mabel W. Chase, jointly with the other older members of the First Universalist Parish of Eastham, also known as the Chapel in the Pines, bring you greetings on this memorable night in our church history, the 75th anniversary of the founding of our church. In conjunction with this occasion I have prepared a tape, giving you the highlights of our accomplishments.

"Early in 1889 steps were taken to establish a Universalist Society in Eastham. On the 12th of August twenty-three members made John E. Ryder their president and organized the first Universalist Parish of Eastham. Rev. Donald Fraser of Orleans held services in the Town Hall during the summer. In August a

Sunday School of thirty-three pupils, with six teachers, appointed Luther B. Smith their first superintendent. Measures for erecting a place of worship were considered, Captain Edward Penniman, heading a subscription list for the necessary funds and taking untiring interest in the completion of the edifice.

"A site was donated by W. H. Nickerson, on which a pretty church, forty by fifty feet, was built, and on the last Wednesday in January, 1890, it was dedicated. The membership of the society numbered forty-nine at that time. I. F. Crosby of Brewster, John Kendrick of Orleans, and others not residents of the town gave cordial support to the movement, the result of which is a credit to the Town of Eastham. The pastor in charge is Rev. Donald Fraser, Recorded Minutes of 1890.

"The builder of the church was Mr. Elkenah Hopkins and the male members of the Society donated many hours of labor, its cost approximately two thousand, three hundred dollars. In consulting the existing written records we find that July 18, '89, the first meeting of the Ladies Circle was held, with the following officers present: President, Mrs. John E. Ryder; Vice-President, Mrs. William H. Nickerson; Treasurer, Mrs. Edward Penniman.

"Now ministers from 1889 to 1964: Donald Fraser, Edward Pierce, Fred W. Evans, Henry E. Lesh, Nathan S. Hill, Henry Riegel, Arthur Mercer, Hazel S. Kirk, Rodney J. Mooney, Thomas Cross, Otis Alford, Henry Maier, Robert T. Weston, Sr., William L. McKinney, John Christensen, Harry Roggee, and Daniel Weck.

"Interim ministers have included Rev. Harold Arnold, Father Dudley Zuver, Rev. Charles DeVries, and many guests and lay

preachers.

"Present and recent history of the church. The church under the leadership of Rev. Robert T. Weston, Sr., Rev. William L. McKinney, and Rev. John Christensen was active summers from 1936 to 1951, at which time full-time services were resumed. We give a special appreciation at this time for the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Horton, Sr. and the Rev. Harry W. Roggee in reopening the church.

"The minutes of that period read: At the annual meeting January 24, 1951, it was voted to hold regular Sunday services at eleven a.m., the Rev. Harry Roggee conducting these services. Leslie E. Chase was then president of the parish. He served from 1928 until the time of his death, October 1952. Mrs. Sophia Stone served faithfully as clerk from 1938 to 1953, when Mrs. Eva Brown assumed office.

"In 1952 Mrs. Philip Horton, Sr. organized a children's choir, which she served until 1954. On October 10, 1954 a Sunday School was organized under the leadership of Mrs. Kenneth Young. These have been two of the most important contributions to the life of the church since reorganizing it in 1951. Many improvements have been made with the aid of the women's organization. The kitchen has been modernized, electricity and toilet facilities and a new heating plant have been installed. The Ladies Circle in recent years has been under the leadership of Mrs. Mabel Chase, Mrs. Helen Clark, and currently under Mrs. Dorothy Johnson.

"Those contributing to the musical life of the church since

its reopening are J. Russell Chase, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Horton, Sr., Eugenia Merrill, Nonnie Johnson Temple, and E. Weston Wilbur, in addition to many guest soloists from places far and near, some of whom are from the Cape Cod Conservatory, who are now using the church as an extension of the main school.

"In 1963 the First Universalist Parish in Eastham and the First Unitarian Church of Brewster joined forces and jointly hired Rev. Daniel Weck, in order to have a full-time Universalist-Unitarian to serve this liberal church.

"Present officers of the parish are as follows: President, Otto E. Nickerson; Clerk and Treasurer, Edith Pierce; Trustees, Harvey T. Moore, Sadie Flint, Bertram Munzon. Music committee: E. Weston Wilbur, J. Russell Chase. Officers of the Ladies Circle: President, Dorothy Johnson; Treasurer, Margaret Collins; Secretary, Sadie Flint. Minister of the church: Rev. Daniel Weck. Organist: E. Weston Wilbur. Substitute organist: J. Russell Chase.

"In terms of the closing lines of the little booklet published by the church in July, 1958, quote, 'We look backward with pleasure and forward with faith.'

Q: Thank you, Russell. That's very, very good.

Russell Chase: You're very welcome.

Q: I would like to ask you if you remember any of the ministers personally and what they were like?

RC: Yes, I do.

Q: Flesh them out a little.

RC: All right. I remember and I played for Robert T. Weston, Rev. McKinney, John Christensen, Harry Roggee, Daniel Weck, and Rev. John Ogden Fisher.

Q: Can you say a little bit about each one of them? Where they came from and what kind of people they were. I think you mentioned that Dr. Weston gave revolutionary sermons?

RC: Yes. He gave a sermon which made him famous. It was called "I Saw Hiroshima Dead". I heard him give it in Provincetown, in Brewster, and in the Chapel in the Pines, and that service I played for.

Q: What did he have to say?

RC: He saw Hiroshima dead and that meant he saw a cross from a Christian church that had been melted by the bomb and it took the form of a swastika. His next message, as I recall, was his comment to the women of the church. "If you are going to have a glorified social club and nothing more, we might as well close the doors of the church." I was wondering how it would go over and no one took offense and people got busy.

Q: And what did they do?

RC: Reopened the church on a year-round basis and from the material that I just read.

Q: Is the tape available that your mother made?

RC: I believe so some place, but I don't know where. I believe Otto Nickerson had it at one time and possibly Mrs. Munzom might know something about it. There was also a tape that was sent by Dr. Robert Weston and that would be among the same things. I do not know where they are.

Q: Now we'll go on to the other ministers, if you can tell me something about their personalities and their messages.

RC: I think the next one was William McKinney. Came from Bridgewater, I believe, and he was pastor of the Unitarian Church that was on the campus of Bridgewater State Teachers College.

Q: What kind of man was he?

RC: Very big man and very deaf. He had to talk very loudly, and perhaps he was thinking of the larger church, where he preached in Bridgewater.



Q: Was he also a liberal man?

RC: Yes. Yes, I don't think we had any who was not, except Rev. Harry Roggee and he had been a Baptist and his particular interest was in helping the young people to get started, but he was not the kind of man who considered himself a giver of sermons, but a reader of the scripture.

John Christensen was a very talented person vocally, and the music hit a high spot when he was there. He had no car, and I remember we went over to get him and take him back to Chatham. He was with us one summer, I think.

Rev. Daniel Weck was somewhat of a revolutionary. He loved to go around wearing a red vest under his coat, but the vest always was peeking through. He was the first one that I recall to give scriptures or the equivalent from Confucius, Buddha, Mohammud and so forth, covering the various religions of the world. He was married to a very talented artist, and I don't mean somebody who just adopted painting for a hobby.

Rev. John Ogden Fisher was a man of high intellect, a dominant personality, and at times irritating. His wife Dorothy was a superb organist and had a very difficult personality. She conducted some programs in the Chapel in the Pines and they were excellent. I was there personally and heard them.

The interim pastor, Harold Arnold, I don't remember, except he lived in North Eastham. I do remember the day that Franklin Delano Roosevelt died, they had a service at the Eastham School and they had called him and he gave a sermon on FDR.

Dudley Zuver was a very unusual person. I remember one of his sermons, "What Do We Do With the Junkpile of Human Knowledge After We Have Acquired It?" He no longer preached. He lived in Wellfleet with his wife Nora, who was an artist. He dressed in his Episcopalian garb, a long black head-to-foot kind of cloak or vestment. He was never dull. I learned a great deal about Episcopalianism. He was definitely not oriented toward Unitarian philosophy and religion.

Q: Did he celebrate mass in the chapel?

RC: No. No, he didn't celebrate mass. It was more a history of the Episcopalian religious orientation and their religious holidays, and we got an education in a different contemporary religion.

And, of course, Rev. Charles De Vries was from the Brewster Unitarian Church and his sermons were always very liberal oriented, and the thing that reminds me of him in the spring is the forsythia. I remember him one day reaching over the pulpit, touching a forsythia blossom and saying, "All the universe is contained in this flower." I think he was trying to give the microcosmic and the macrocosmic in saying it was all together in the flower.

During the interim lay speakers, we spoke on our own lives. I did a Quaker meeting service. Axel Graven had had much Christian Science in his background, and he was an attorney in Orleans, and I had been told that he had earned a doctor's degree

at Oxford. That I am not sure of, but that was his reputation.

Rev. Peter Palchers I believe was connected with the Barnstable House of Correction.

Miss Clarissa Smith had been a schoolteacher and she had come down here to retire, and she told of her college life.

Miss Eleanor Gay was a social worker and teacher of social work in various colleges and was very active on Cape Cod in the social work field.

Mrs. George Dickey gave her own college history and her life.

Rev. Estherbrook I no longer remember, except I asked him what time he wanted to start the service, and he said, "Your time is my time." And I remember pondering over exactly what he meant by that.

Rev. John Filler was the husband of a student of mine from the Conservatory, and he had the little church-- I think it was in Cummaquid. It's a small white church on Route 28. I did go hear him preach once over there and he came down to the Chapel in the Pines, and what he had to say was, "One thing about the Unitarians is they are absolutely honest about their interpretation of Scripture."

Those are the things that stand out in my mind about these various ministers.

Q: Thank you very much. When you were talking, I was thinking about the debate that now rages about politics in the pulpit. Did this bother anybody? Did it occur in the chapel over the years and was it a bone of contention?

RC: When Rev. Robert Weston was there, who later became Dr. Robert Weston, there was much on the history of the Bible. It was told, stories told around campfires, handed down from generation to generation, and was very much like the game of gossip, where somebody starts a story and it goes around and then there is a comparison between the first rendition and the tenth rendition. It's interesting that back in those days, about 1938, that this did not cause any dissension. It perhaps upset some of the other churches in the locale, but it didn't upset the members of the congregation. Nobody left. They started with six people and after two or three summers they had worked up to fifty. So I would say he was well received.

Yes, there was one thing. He predicted the problems we were going to have with Russia then, approximately thirty-five to forty years ago.

Q: What did he base it on?

RC: Human nature perhaps in general. But he said, those who are our friends now, we can count on to become our enemies later. And it has worked out approximately in terms of his prediction.

Q: The things we've been talking about are in the time frame from the 1930's to the present, right?

RC: Yes. With the previous history, from 1889.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about your mother, Mabel Warren Cobb Chase. You said that she was an expert in elocution. Do you want to elaborate on that?

RC: Yes. She graduated from the Elizabeth Flower Lewis School of Elocution, Oratory and Dramatic Art, Worcester, Massachusetts, specializing in elocution and dramatic art, in 1907. She came down here to the Cape, which was a cultural wilderness at that point, and tried to introduce some entertainment. She was hired as an elocutionist by the Wellfleet Methodist Church on several occasions. She would come down and stay overnight, do her performances, and go back, and I have two or three records of that and something else I'm writing. She coached two high school plays, Orleans High School, and she gave entertainments in the Eastham Methodist Church, the old Methodist Church that was in the Evergreen Cemetery, and also entertainments in the days when it was ethically permissible to give minstrel shows in blackface at the Chapel in the Pines.

I remember one story of my mother's, talking about how she and her mother made artificial flowers one time, all winter, to decorate the church, the Chapel in the Pines, on Easter.

For a great many years, when she was raising her family, she dropped the elocution, but then after we had all reached our teens, late teens and more, she started taking it up again and did readings. She would read "The Night Before Christmas", and she also did a tape for me, in which she did three or four

things, which I still have.

Q: Did some of this rub off on you children? Did you have little plays at home and did you get up to recite in front of relatives?

RC: Not if I could help it. [Laughs] I took part in a play one time. I was an Indian. I sat under a pine tree and said, "Ugh." So that gives you my reaction. No, it turned me toward scientific thinking rather than the dramatic, although I followed her interest in piano. She was my first piano teacher and I was able to read music before I was able to read English, at five.

Q: Prodigy. What about the rest of the family? Were they interested in the dramatic arts?

RC: Not at all. They were interested only in music, because our teacher from Albania, Thomas Nassi, succeeded in talking them into playing an instrument. But they were not particularly interested in music or in drama.

Q: You mentioned in the first interview that we had, there was a tape that your mother had done about the submarine landing in the First World War.

RC: Yes, and I still have it.

RC: Yes. Yes.

Q: Do you remember what was the story on the tape as she told it?

RC: Yes. She was here in her father's boarding house, Comfort Cottage, and they had a house full of guests, and she heard strange sounds and she was able to pick up the fact that they were not things from submarines or any of the things involved in the war. And she said, "I think that is a German submarine," or something like that. And people said, no, it couldn't be. But it turned out to be and people went there. In general, that was the gist of the tape.

Q: We'll certainly appreciate having it to copy.

RC: All right.

Q: We didn't talk too much about your school experiences in the little schoolhouse over here. Could you talk about your teachers and some of the things you remember?

RC: Oh, yes. My first teacher was Florence Keith, and my neighbor, Bertha Keefe, was doing her substitute teaching under Miss Keith. I knew Bertha well. Her mother worked for my grandfather and I had known her as Bertha from the time I was

three, and I couldn't understand why I couldn't call her Bertha in school and I had to call her Miss Keefe. [Laughter] That was a little confusing.

I remember Miss Keith, who walked to school. She lived over on Nauset, near Don Sparrow's present home, and she lived with a Mrs. Holbrook in the house that belongs to Bud and Millie Cummings. And then she and Miss Keith moved to the new house. She was very interested in birds, flowers, and she would talk a great deal about this. She was a very creative teacher, long before her time. We used to make Eskimo villages, Indian villages, and these weren't boxes about Pilgrims.

I had a cousin, Eleanor Knowles, now Eleanor Knowles Blakeslee, a counselor in Rhode Island, and she lived in the neighborhood. She was my cousin, my playmate, my rival. People were scarce. And we would come home from school and reenact what we had done in school. She'd be teacher and I'd be pupil. Then I'd be teacher and she'd be pupil.

The other thing I remember about Miss Keith was she would take us on walks, now where the Seashore Park is, and two or three things. She took us to the old spring that Dr. Richardson took water from for his patients up in Boston. Showed us the spring and that is more or less directly under where the big Richardson house is. That was one. She took us into the swamp and she showed us what gooseberries were, and I think we all picked a couple. I've looked for that gooseberry bush many times since, but I've never been able to find it. And the third thing, she took us back of the schoolhouse to see an ant hill. She



wanted us to see how ants lived. And when we came back, I remember we saw some blackberry vines and that became the drawing lesson of the day.

She could be very interesting. She could be very frightening too. But in general, yes, one outstanding thing. The day we graduated from eighth grade, she called us back and presented us with material we had done in grade one. She did this every year, so we could see our growth between grade one and grade eight.

Miss Keith taught grades one and two at the time I was in school there. Virginia Horton, Mrs. Clayton Horton, taught grades three, four and five. She was the intermediate teacher. She was a very warm, very motherly kind of person, and I used to be afraid she would retire before I could have her for my school-teacher, because she was always saying, I'm going to retire next year. But she didn't, so I had grades three and four and five with Virginia Horton. All pleasant memories with her.

And then grades six, seven and eight with Otto Nickerson, who was probably a genius in the true sense of the word. Not used loosely, but specifically. He was teacher of all subjects for three grades, plus being the principal of an eight-grade school, overseeing the whole thing.

I remember he couldn't sing. That was one thing Otto couldn't do, but he could draw and he could draw better than the drawing teacher. He always had flowers on the desk.

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

RC: The walls were painted a dark green and he always brought enough flowers to make that appear at the time to be a very beautiful building, and I used to look in it before it had been changed over for the Historical Society, because the side on the west, when I was in school there, was blank, no windows. And it was all windows on the east side, and it would get very dark on certain afternoons. I can remember when the lights were put in, electric light, and he would put the lights on in the afternoon. And it got too hot in the morning, so he'd have to pull the curtains up. They came up from the bottom. So it would cool down a little bit and we wouldn't roast.

Q: What kind of lighting did you have before they put the lights in?

RC: I don't remember, but at that time my grandfather had lights put in here and they used to be hanging. There was a big hanging lamp here and one in there. I don't know whether I ever went to school there-- when I was six years old, I can't remember whether there was ever any lights of any kind, but I do remember the lights being turned on. I think it was during the seventh and eighth grades, something like that. I can't remember.

I do remember the old stoves. They were Heatrolas. And there'd be a long pipe from the stove to the main chimney, and in the back room they joined the three together with the euphemistically called outdoor plumbing. There was a stove there and that was an assembly room, heated by this one stove.

I can remember Christmas time, every room had a real Christmas tree in it. That was before fire laws, when they said no. And I remember the old janitor, George Hardwick. I remember one year he gave me four Christmas trees, because I was Christmas tree happy at that point. I brought them all home. He would be over at the school about five o'clock in the morning. I lived next door then. The house that I lived in was where the National Seashore Park sign is, so I could see the smoke coming out of the chimney.

Q: Let's go back to Otto Nickerson. We have heard that he was a strict disciplinarian.

RC: Yes. The rooms were absolutely silent. The other two classes-- there were three classes in a room-- had to keep silence. Each class, as it progressed, would hear what was coming up the next two years. So we had it half-learned before we got to the point.

Yes, he was a strict disciplinarian. He was a very fair person and very organized, and he gave the appearance that he loved teaching. And I remember the day he retired. They had a celebration for him and people came from six states. I spent most of the afternoon there and I regretted I didn't spend all of it there, because I missed the first half-hour and there were some people I would liked to have seen. I saw people that I hadn't seen in twenty, thirty years, and they were amazed that I remembered them.

Q: When you went there, did they have shop teaching? I had heard that they did.

RC: No. No. There was shop teaching during the WPA days, but it was at Eastham Town Hall. A Mr. Southard was the teacher of shop and he was Edythe Trautz's grandfather.

Q: And the girls did Home Economics, what we used to call Home Economics. Did they fix lunches for you?

RC: No. We brought our own, and I remember I didn't, because I lived across the street. And there were three or four other people that went home for lunch, and a group down the road-- they were the first blacks in town and they were playmates of mine. They lived with the Ellison's and apparently they were state children. That's where they came from.

Q: Which means me to a question I don't think I've asked anybody before. Was there color prejudice and race prejudice and religious prejudice in Eastham?

RC: Not much. It reminds me of-- I think it's one of the musicals. "Hate has to be very carefully taught." No. I remember of running into it once with these people, but it was not done on purpose. They said they had a new baby down to the house and I said, "Is it white or black?" [Laughter] I thought

I was going to be killed. But that was not the intention and our relationship continued on. I don't remember of these people being singled out. I got sort of high and mighty one time in the first grade in Sunday School, when I had a black Sunday School teacher, the only black teacher I ever had in my life. This was at the Methodist Church. But I actually was using it as an excuse, because I didn't want to go. She was a very nice person and I saw her at "Otto's Day". All his black students came back with their families, so there was a whole line of them that were at the school. I don't know how far away they were. The one particular one that I wanted to see didn't make it, but that often happens at a reunion. The people that you're looking forward to don't show up and the ones you don't expect do and things like that.

There were problems with Roman Catholics. Slight problems. It was predominantly Protestant, and when the first Catholic church was built-- I believe that was in Brewster-- a former neighbor, who played the role of aunt to us, came and lived here after her husband died, and I took her to Mass, when I was going to play at Brewster Unitarian. And I remember, with annoyance, one day a priest asked, "Is he a reliable person? Will he pick you up?" That did not go over too well. Other than that, I never ran into anything personally.

Q: There was no anti-Semitism then?

RC: No. Yes, there was a man in Harwich ran a junk yard. He

was the old Jew to stay away from. He was held up as an example of Jewish people. And on the other side of the story, there was a man named Mouchman, who my grandfather got started in business, and he became a very loyal person, and the Mouchman family stayed loyal to my people.

My grandmother's sister married-- I'm not sure whether he was Jewish, German, or how they put that over, but his name was Schwartz, and a great many of my grandfather's early people at the Comfort Cottage and they were New York Jews. But there was never any problems. None whatsoever.

Q: In other words, you were not taught at home to--

RC: To hate? No. No, I wasn't. No. No.

Q: How about political parties? I understand that there was one Democrat in town for years.

RC: Yes. Yes, my cousin's father. I would go down and talk with him.

Q: What was his name?

RC: Abbott Knowles. Yes. He was Eleanor Knowles Blakeslee's father. And he was an extremely good piano tuner. Steinhardt & Sons gave him the reputation of being the best one in Massachusetts, one of the six best in New England. So the house

was full of pianos. Always four of them. And I would swap around with my cousin and play these pianos. She'd like one and I'd always like another one.

And I talked with him. I don't think I said two words all afternoon. Hello and Goodby and Ah-hah. And he said, "Oh, you're a wonderful conversationalist. It's wonderful to talk with you." [Laughter]

I think he was the Democrat you probably have in mind.

Q: I just wondered how he happened to-- well, you wouldn't know that, I don't suppose-- how he happened to do this in a--

RC: No, I don't know. I used to be with him when he came to tune the piano, when he came to rebuild the piano, and I believe he had lived with my grandmother and grandfather and my mother when they were living in Cambridge or East Boston, when he was going to school and learning his trade.

Q: Was he Lucy Hopkins' father?

RC: Yes, he's Lucy's father. And Lucy also worked for my grandfather here at the Comfort Cottage.

Q: She washed dishes, I believe.

RC: I don't remember.

Q: Russell, can you think of anything else that you want to put on the tape for posterity?

RC: Yes. There's a bit about my father. He was written up in the Barnstable County History. He's in Volume Three, I think it is. At that time my sister hadn't been born, but my brother and I are listed as his children.

Q: The Barnstable County what was that?

RC: If you wait, I can give you the exact title.

Q: All right. I'll turn this off.

[TAPE OFF]

RC: "Page 367, Volume III, HISTORY OF PLYMOUTH, NORFOLK AND BARNSTABLE COUNTIES, MASSACHUSETTS. Leslie Emerson Chase. Having the foresight and ability to realize the possibilities that lay in one branch of the agricultural industry of Cape Cod, Leslie Emerson Chase of Eastham has risen to prominence through his successful achievements in the asparagus industry, which has grown to such enormous proportions in this section. Mr. Chase is a man of vision, coupled with capacity for unlimited energy and endeavour, and since coming to Eastham has always found time, in addition to his many and varied business interests, to devote to the service of his town and his fellow citizens, and in its civic



functions he has held many elective offices. He is a true example of a public-spirited citizen of the highest type, giving unselfishly of his time and support to every worthy activity which involves the wellbeing of his community.

"Mr. Chase was born in Brewster August 21, 1885, son of Charles W. and Harriet (Hattie) F. Gill Chase, the father being a native of Brewster and his mother a native of East Boston. Charles W. Chase has been a farmer for many years, having in his early youth followed the fishing fleets, after which he returned to his native town, but later moved to Eastham and engaged in agriculture, in which he has been highly successful.

"Leslie Emerson Chase was educated in the public schools of Eastham and Orleans and at the age of fourteen, having completed his formal education, began his business career by working at asparagus cutting for a time, after which he farmed for two or three years. He next ventured into the shellfishing trade and followed that line for three or four years, after which he went to sea as a quartermaster on the old "Dominion", a famous vessel, which was the last side-wheeler to ply between Boston and New York around Cape Cod. After following the life of a sailor for some time, ill health compelled him to relinquish his seafaring activities and he entered the probate business, in which he continued for a year.

"He next became associated with the railroad business in his connection with the Boston & Northern Electric Railroad and the Worcester Consolidated Fitchburg & Leominster, which occupied him for five years. Coming to Eastham, Mr. Chase opened a first-

class retail fish and produce business, combining with great  
success until 1914, gaining a large patronage and establishing a  
reputation for quality products and service of the most courteous  
and efficient kind. Recognizing the future that lay in the  
asparagus business, he devoted all his efforts to this industry,  
with the result that he now operates one of the largest produce  
centers in this vicinity, shipping his product direct to Boston  
by his own trucks, and in this connection handles on his trucks  
all the asparagus raised in this section in addition to his own.  
This enterprise gives employment to many of the town's residents  
and has been an important factor in the agricultural developments  
of the entire Cape.

"In the financial affairs of the community Mr. Chase is  
prominently active as president of the Eastham Farmers  
Association, Inc. In the public life of the town he has served  
as Town Clerk since 1919 and he was elected Collector of Taxes  
and Treasurer, having been elected annually since then to these  
offices. He formerly served as Constable and was also Sealer of  
Weights and Measures, and in this business effectively cleaned up  
this district. He was also Attendance Officer for the Eastham  
schools for four or five years.

"Mr. Chase is allied to the Republican Party, in which he is  
a leading figure, having been Republican Town Committee chairman  
for many years. He is a charter member of the Grange of Eastham,  
No. 308, and has held the offices of Past Master and Past  
Overseer, and is also a Trustee of the Congregational Cemetery of  
Eastham. His religious adherence is given to the Universalist

Church.

"Leslie Emerson Chase married on May 4, 1912, at Eastham, Mabel W. Cobb, born in Cambridge, daughter of Joseph A. and Eleanor Warren Cobb, her father a native of Eastham and her mother born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Mr. and Mrs. Chase are the parents of two sons, Joseph Russell Chase, born March 9, 1922, and second, Charles Whitman, born January 23, 1928." (And I added my sister, who was born April 29, 1929.)

And this is the Worcester Historical Publishing Company, Inc., New York. Author, Elroy S. Thompson, Volume III, 1928, page 367, Leslie Emerson Chase.

Q: That's a very nice tribute. You had wonderful parents.

RC: Yes, I had very interesting parents, and they were doing all sorts of things.

Q: Just one more thing. You are in the process of writing a book, called MEMORIES, MELODIES AND MUSIC THERAPY?

RC: Yes.

Q: Is this the first book you've written?

RC: Yes.

Q: And what is inspiring this?

RC: It's a review of my life, starting with my family and the grandparents. I'm the first registered music therapist on Cape Cod. I studied in Boston, worked in the state hospitals, three, and I was very interested in one of the teachers that came here, Olive Main, that I have referred to, and she had many interesting techniques which she had us do. And I was working at that time in my brother's restaurant from eight to two and from five to midnight seven days a week, fourteen weeks in succession. And I would go in to take my voice lessons, dragging over the threshold. After some exercises, breathing exercises, which I would assume she lifted from Yoga-- and her initials were OM, Oom-- I would sing fifteen minutes of exercises, fifteen minutes in Italian, and fifteen minutes of anything I wanted to.

She was a most unusual person and through what I experienced going in, coming out, and feeling the change that was in me, I got interested in music therapy.

Q: Is the book going to be privately published or what do you plan for it?

RC: I haven't got to that point yet.

Q: Write it first, right?

RC: Yes. Then worry about publishing it. Yes, I'm working on it. I've been collecting material for about six months and I've

taken down one volume of notes.

Q: Anything else you want to add at this point?

RC: I can't think of anything at the moment.

Q: All right. Well, maybe later. We can always come back.  
Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW